

whether he learns the Black Arts or not, reaches a time in his life where goodness seems pathetic. For whatever reason, he feels the hunger of the inner abyss, sees the eyes that surround him in the night, and decides that he was never meant for a life of virtue. Every human being, at some point, hears the Darkness call his name. But while other people wander in the woods a short ways from the fire, the diabolist decides to enter the night unafraid and see where his instincts take him.

The Bellyful of Thorns

The journey always starts with hunger. Like a dog whose chain has been kept tight too long, the would-be Infernalist is wild with frustration and suppressed rage. No matter what the cost, he must be free; if that means damnation, then so be it!

Every person is born with a desire to sin. Everyone does so from time to time. But the initiate-to-be wants more than just vague naughtiness. He craves indulgences and insights that mere crimes cannot satisfy. And so, at this stage, he goes off to find them. The Path of Screams begins with a

decision. A person may be dragged away from it in the end, but he always makes the first step on his own.

Invoking the Abyss

Once he's decided to leave virtue behind, the initiate curses his former slavery. Realizing that he's been blinded and retrained by an unjust god, he begins to smash that god's taboos. Most newcomers begin with small, simple crimes - petty larceny, blasphemy, simple assaults upon persons and property - although some display more ambition. At this stage, the initiate usually meets some like-minded friends: his future mentors or partners in crime.

Sooner or later, he calls upon the powers of the Enemy, the Adversary either within or without that the old god could not tolerate. Most times, the initiate literally invokes the Devil, or celebrates a ritual to gods his culture has forbidden. Sometimes he does something suicidal, like running off naked to a snowstorm or flinging himself into a bonfire; by challenging both his flesh and his sense of self, he summons up the Enemy within.

Thus, the Void is opened and acknowledged. By

violating both the laws and the religion by which he was bound, the initiate invokes the Abyss and sets himself apart. Many initiates never make it past this point; consumed by doubt, terror or shame, they fall back to the fire. Sometimes the authorities take over and imprisonment or kill the would-be Infernalist. But occasionally something answers to the call. A demon takes an interest in the initiate and marks him for future study.

Lex Praedatorium

In the course of his challenges, the initiate learns the Law of Predation: Some eat, most are eaten. Since the laws of god and man forbid a person from injuring or killing his own kind, the initiate turns on his brothers, and sisters like a rabid wolf. Searching out the weakest and most vulnerable "sheep", he begins to feast.

Robbery and murder become his favorite pastimes. He might feel some compassion for his victims at first, but sooner or later he learns to enjoy the game.

Thus, the demon tests its would-be pawn and the initiate acquires a thirst for criminality. More often than not, the

Daemon manifests at this time, possibly as a teacher, often as a white-hot poker up the initiate's ass.

The Nightmare Dance

Ah, yes. The Daemon: the blazing kiss of mystery that draws a Sleeper into Wakefulness. When and if the initiate gets a mystick summons, his Daemon begins its none-too-subtle work. Seducing, mocking, cajoling or dragging the aspirant into Awakening, the Mystick Self appears, first in dreams, then in visions of near-insanity. The Nightmare Dance begins.

No Daemon is gentle, but an Infernal one is worse than most. Taking the role of predator, the guiding spirit forces the initiate to show his spine. There's no place for cowards at Satan's table, and the Daemon is literally the Satan within. A manifestation of the inner Adversary, this soul tutor sweeps the aspirant along on the harrowing journeys where everything he has ever feared about himself burns into his heart like a brand. Thus, the would-be magus either faces his own soul head-on, or settles into the role of a lesser wizard... or slave.